In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows. Applicant has included herewith a complete claim set with insertions and deletions indicated by underlining and strikethrough, respectively.

1. (Currently amended) A method of diagnosing a cardiovascular condition characterized by aberrant expression of a Fit-1/ST2 nucleic acid molecule or an expression product thereof, said method comprising:

a) contacting a biological sample from a subject with an agent, wherein said agent specifically binds to said Fit-1/ST2 nucleic acid molecule, an expression product thereof, or a fragment of an expression product thereof; and

b) measuring the amount of bound agent and determining therefrom if the expression of said Fit-1/ST2 nucleic acid molecule or of an expression product thereof is aberrant, wherein the aberrant expression ~~being~~ is diagnostic of the condition;

~~wherein the nucleic acid molecule is at least one nucleic acid molecule selected from the group consisting of Fit-1, CD44, Lot-1, AA892598, and Mrg-1.~~

2.-5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~condition is a~~ cardiovascular condition is selected from the group consisting of myocardial infarction, stroke, arteriosclerosis, and heart failure.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the cardiovascular condition is cardiac hypertrophy.

8. (Currently amended) A method for determining the stage of a cardiovascular condition in a subject characterized by aberrant expression of a nucleic acid molecule or an expression product thereof, comprising:

monitoring a sample from a patient, for ~~a parameter selected from the group consisting of~~

(i) a Fit-1/ST2 nucleic acid molecule ~~selected from the group consisting of Fit-1, vacuolar ATPase, CD44, Lot-1, AA892598, and Mrg-1,~~

(ii)   a polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid <u>of part (i)</u>,

(iii)   a peptide <u>fragment of</u> ~~derived from~~ the polypeptide, and

(iv)   an antibody which selectively binds the polypeptide or peptide,

as a determination of the stage of said ~~vascular~~ <u>cardiovascular</u> condition in the subject.

9.   (Canceled)

10.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, wherein the step of monitoring comprises contacting the sample with a detectable agent selected from the group consisting of:

(a)   an isolated nucleic acid molecule which ~~selectively~~ hybridizes ~~under stringent conditions~~ to the nucleic acid molecule of (i),

(b)   an antibody <u>or an antigen binding fragment thereof</u> which ~~selectively~~ binds the polypeptide of (ii), or the peptide of (iii), and

(c)   a polypeptide or peptide which binds the antibody of (iv).

11.-36. (Canceled)

37.   (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the sample is a biological fluid or a tissue.

38.   (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the biological fluid is blood or serum.

39.   (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the agent is (i) an isolated nucleic acid molecule that hybridizes to the Fit-1/ST2 nucleic acid molecule or (ii) an antibody that binds the polypeptide encoded by the Fit-1/ST2 nucleic acid molecule, or an antigen-binding fragment of the antibody.

40.   (New) The method of claim 39, wherein the nucleic acid or the antibody is labeled with a radioactive label or an enzyme.

41. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the cardiovascular condition is characterized by mechanical strain, mechanical overload or mechanically-induced deformation in cardiac cells or tissue.

42. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the sample is a biological fluid or a tissue.

43. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the biological fluid is blood or serum.

44. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the nucleic acid or the antibody is labeled with a radioactive label or an enzyme.

45. (New) The method of claim 10, comprising assaying the sample for the peptide.

46. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the cardiovascular condition is selected from the group consisting of myocardial infarction, stroke, arteriosclerosis, and heart failure.

47. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the cardiovascular condition is cardiac hypertrophy.

48. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the cardiovascular condition is characterized by mechanical strain, mechanical overload or mechanically-induced deformation in cardiac cells or tissue.